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# DEPARTMENT OF NURSING EDUCATION

IN CHARGE OF

ISABEL M. STEWART, R.N.

## HOW TO ECONOMIZE TIME AND ENERGY IN SCHOOLS OF NURSING<sup>1</sup>

BY JUNE RAMSEY, R.N.

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In considering this topic, there are, it seems to me, several main points for consideration; one including all purely mechanical factors, the other having to do with the academic features.

First, we may consider uneducative and wasteful such details as those pertaining to the routine of hospital administration and housekeeping, among which are the thousand and one minutiae in the admission of patients,—the listing of clothes, care of valuables, etc.; housekeeping tasks, such as dusting, general cleaning of utility rooms, utensils, etc., duties which belong more properly to ward maids; making of beds of convalescent patients, filling ice caps, and the large amount of drudgery devolving on the student nurse which, after a few repetitions, has no educational value. That she should know how to do all these things, and the reasons for doing them, is indisputable, but that daily repetition is required for three years to acquire proficiency in such procedures is open to controversy.

One might enumerate at length daily tasks required which are for the purpose only of getting the hospital work done, at the expense of the time and energy of the student nurses. Therefore, with the introduction of another type of ward helper, much of the necessary routine labor involved in the care of patients and in hospital administration and housekeeping would naturally be taken from the students, thus giving more time to carry on a constructive program of education best fitted to the needs of the individual student.

Next, I would suggest a complete curriculum, carefully planned for three years, rich in subject matter, and offering some electives. These should be given in the third year, when the student will have completed the required course of study and when she may be given an opportunity to fit herself for some specialized branch of nursing work, so that when she leaves her nursing school she is qualified to meet some one of the demands made upon the trained nurse of to-day, other than bedside nursing. These electives should prepare for public health, tuberculosis or mental nursing, some form of social work, laboratory work, administrative, or teaching positions.

<sup>1</sup> Read at a meeting of Teachers College Alumni, February, 1920.

In almost every school of nursing are found students who have prepared for, and who have been teaching. Seeing in nursing an opportunity for service of a different kind and perhaps more to their liking, they are admitted to some training school, usually selected after careful consideration and comparison of several schools.

It often happens that no matter what their qualifications, represented by natural ability, special preparation and experience, they are required to undergo, for three years, a certain prescribed routine and at the end are really not fitted, without postgraduate study, to enter the field they have selected. Why not give these students in their third year an opportunity to make use of their experience? With such a foundation as psychology, principles of teaching, and practice in teaching, in addition to two years of theoretical and practical training in the hospital, we could give some one of the many subjects in the training school curriculum to these students to develop and to teach under the direction and supervision of the instructor. I think we would get some very surprising and satisfactory results.

We have, during the past, very often wholly ignored any unusual qualifications on the part of our students to their disillusionment and our loss. We have all the time been crying for instructors and administrators, when right at hand we have had the material, had we known how to utilize and make the most of it.

Last, by directing the natural human interest which every student of nursing brings to her work, to the patient, as the chief educational resource of the hospital, we can early help her to the conception of that patient as material for the laboratory work necessary to the science of nursing.

We should begin early in the course to require case histories and should lay most stress on that point of the history suggested by the subject in hand,—medication in *Materia Medica*, micro-organisms in Bacteriology, social background in Dispensary, psychology in Mental and Nervous, etc. "By the end of the second year the student should have acquired a spirit of inquiry and a habit of knowing the different conditions affecting each patient; the etiology, symptoms, treatment and prophylaxis of the case, the social and economic conditions behind it, and a real interest in the future of this member of society."

Once the idea is established that a definite end is attainable, and that an opportunity is afforded to develop further any special aptitude, a more desirable class of applicants will offer themselves. The students themselves will continue to be interested. How often do we speak of the difference in interest displayed between Junior and Senior students!

In the class room itself much can be done. By making many

correlations early and as fast as possible, curiosity and interest are awakened and students soon learn to make applications of their own accord. Typewritten notes for demonstration of nursing procedures for each student save time and energy spent in dictation by the teacher and in copying by the student and at the same time give a guarantee of accuracy and uniformity and provide against the necessity of correcting note books.

Printed laboratory directions, well planned, for laboratory procedures, definite seating order for large classes, class rooms made comfortable as to seating and lighting facilities, a model class room which is the standard for every ward in the hospital, are details which will certainly save untold time and energy for both students and teachers.

In conclusion, by providing on the part of the school, a wealth of material for preparation in many fields, by giving credit for satisfactory proof of work done in educational institutions elsewhere, and by the omission of labor that has no educational value, we are able to place our schools on the same basis as other professional schools.

Early awakening of interest in the patient as an educational feature is not all; that interest must be sustained and kept alive throughout the course. The elimination of much of the cut and dried routine of the class room with a direction of energy to the development of initiative, resourcefulness, and clear, concise expression of ideas; and the further development of any previous special preparation or experience of an allied nature, will contribute to greater satisfaction and, therefore, keener interest for more careful preparation for any chosen field of work.

#### CORRELATION OF THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL WORK <sup>1</sup>

BY ELSA SCHMIDT, R.N.

Most nurses will agree that we need a greater degree of correlation in the theory and practice of nursing. It requires no justification on my part, as you all know that knowledge, interests, and ideals are never an end in themselves; their function is to influence action. It is how we act, how we respond to this situation or that, how we conduct ourselves under one circumstance or another, that is the final test of knowledge. Authorities on cultural education are just beginning to realize this and, therefore, to-day not so much emphasis is placed on the amount of information students assimilate, but on how this knowledge influences their daily lives. The same principles hold

<sup>1</sup> Extracts from a paper read at the annual meeting of the New York State League of Nursing Education, November, 1919.